

STATE OF ALASKA

*William A. Egan, Governor*



Annual Report of Performance for

*INVENTORY AND CATALOGING*

*DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION  
COLLECTED ON DOLLY VARDEN*

*INVESTIGATIONS OF PUBLIC FISHING ACCESS  
AND AQUATIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS*

by

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## RESEARCH PROJECT SEGMENT

State: Alaska

Project No.: F-9-6

Name: Sport Fish Investigations  
of Alaska

Study No.: A-1

Study Title: Investigations of Public  
Fishing Access and Aquatic  
Habitat Requirements

Period Covered: July 1, 1973 to June 30, 1974

## ABSTRACT

Reserved Use Classifications on State lands for public access were obtained on six lakes. Public access was provided on 89 streams and 157 lakes by other Division of Lands classifications. Reclassification of Open-to-Entry Lands to Resource Management on 2,275,984 acres will provide access and public use sites.

Inventory of the fish resources in the State's six hydrologic regions are discussed.

Recommendations for easements and public access sites were made on Federal, State, Local government and private lands.

The program of public easements across Village and Regional Corporation withdrawals is presented.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Continue the project of investigating Alaska's public fishing access requirements.
2. Continue to assist, provide information, and submit reports and recommendations on fishery resources and access and public use site requirements to the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.
3. Continue public access investigations within Bureau of Land Management areas proposed for disposal.
4. Initiate a program with other state agencies and local governments to provide for development and maintenance of access sites.

5. Continue to assist and advise boroughs and other local governments concerning public access and water use requirements.
6. Continue the electronic data processing of water, land, and limnological information.
7. Budget for stream and lake access acquisition from private land owners.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. To initiate recommendations to land-controlling agencies and individuals for recreational use classifications to provide public access as required.
2. To assist in land-purchase negotiations, withdrawal actions, and land classifications as required.
3. To provide land status surveys, reports, and reviews for specific, potential recreational use lands.
4. To assist, provide information, and submit reports on fishery resources and access requirements to the Joint Federal-State Planning Commission of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.
5. To maintain an up-to-date data process listing of all waters of the state.

#### TECHNIQUES USED

Information concerning biological and limnological characteristics of waters studies was obtained from survey forms and file cards maintained by the Department of Fish and Game, Division of Sport Fish. Fishery information was also obtained while working with Sport Fish staff biologists, using standard biological field survey methods.

Land status information on lands adjacent to lakes and streams was obtained from Borough offices in Anchorage, Soldotna, Fairbanks, Kodiak, Palmer, the State Division of Lands offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and the Bureau of Land Management offices in Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Land records were inspected periodically to determine changes in land status. Land ownership information was also obtained from private mapping companies.

Recommendations were presented at the session of the Joint-Federal Land Use Planning Commission on the management of the fisheries resources within the lands withdrawn for addition to or creation of units of the National Park, Forest, Wildlife Refuge and Wild and Scenic Rivers system, as provided for under section 17(d) (2) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The annual management and research reports of the Commercial Fish and the Sport Fish divisions were used for the fisheries inventories of the State's six hydrologic regions. In addition, reports of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service were examined for inventory purposes.

All trails that have been catalogued and identified by the Department of Fish and Game for recreation purposes have been placed on 1:250,000 USGS maps that identify the native village townships withdrawals and village and regional deficiency areas.

The location and surface area of lakes located within inventory areas were obtained from USGS 1:63,360 scale maps. Lake acreages of surveyed lands were obtained from the lake survey forms at Division of Sport Fish field offices. The grid method was used to determine the acreage of the unsurveyed lakes.

Oblique and vertical aerial photographs were used to locate survey lines, monuments, and other ground control points. The photographs were useful in determining terrain and vegetation characteristics prior to recommending particular access points.

Transposing land ownership boundaries onto aerial photographs was continued. This procedure enabled staff biologists to accurately identify access points for inquiring anglers. Photographic coverage was obtained from Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, State Division of Lands, petroleum companies, and other private firms.

The water body data file was updated with current data and information. In conjunction with these files, the 1:63,360 township map files were reviewed and kept current with water body number, land classification orders and location of land status maps. Additional pertinent information was recorded in both filing systems.

## FINDINGS

### Federal Lands

The Secretary of Interior's proposals for the 17(d) (2) lands were issued in the Federal Register on December 29, 1973. Total acreage of lands involved is approximately 83.3 million acres and is distributed as follows: National Park Service - 29.1 million acres, Bureau of Sport Fish and Wildlife - 24.1 million acres, U.S. Forest Service - 18.8 million acres, Bureau of Sport Fish and Wildlife & Bureau of Land Management joint management - 10.3 million acres and Wild and Scenic Rivers - 1.0 million acres.

The sessions of the joint Federal-State Land Use Commission were attended in June for explanation of the recommendations from a Fish and Game management view for all of the lands withdrawn under Section 17(d) (2)

of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. In addition, Environmental Impact Statements on the 28 proposals by the Secretary of the Interior on these lands were reviewed and comments prepared for the respective agencies.

The State is divided into six major hydrologic areas for resource inventory purposes by the Resource Planning Team of the Joint State-Federal Land Use Planning Commission (Figure 1).

The Arctic Region containing 52 million acres is divided into three subregions: (1) West Arctic, (2) Colville, and (3) East Arctic. The Northwest Region containing 43 million acres is divided into the (1) Kotzebue Sound and (2) Norton Sound subregions. The Yukon Region containing 130 million acres is divided into six subregions as follows: (1) Lower Yukon, (2) Central Yukon, (3) Koyukuk, (4) Upper Yukon, (5) Tanana, and (6) Upper Yukon-Canada. The Southwest Region containing 70 million acres is divided into three subregions as follows: (1) Kuskokwim Bay, (2) Bristol Bay, and (3) Aleutian. The Southcentral Region containing 53 million acres is divided into three subregions: (1) Kodiak-Shelikof, (2) Cook Inlet and (3) Gulf of Alaska. The Southeast Region is not subdivided and contains 27 million acres.

A separate report containing a list of the more abundant and important species of fish and shellfish with a brief resume of the distribution of the freshwater and anadromous fish was presented for each region. Whenever possible, the harvest of the various fish and shellfish was averaged over as many years as data was available to provide an indication of past annual yields. A list of stations and sites and their purposes for research on fish and wildlife was included. A brief description of any known man-made disturbances to the habitat was presented. All reports were reviewed by area fish biologists before submission to the Resource Planning Team. The fisheries inventory report will be combined with the inventories of all the various disciplines for eventual publication.

Under Section 17(b) (1), "The Planning Commission shall identify public easements across lands selected by Village Corporations and the Regional Corporations and at periodic points along the courses of major waterways which are reasonably necessary to guarantee international treaty obligations, a full right of public use and access for recreation, hunting, transportation, utilities, docks and such other public uses as the Planning Commission determines to be important. (2) In identifying public easements the Planning Commission shall consult with appropriate State and Federal agencies, shall review proposed transportation plans, and ...".

Each Village Corporation's core township was located on 1:250,000 USGS maps. All of the trails catalogued by the Department of Fish and Game were placed on these maps. These are being reviewed by the area biologists to identify any trails that have been omitted or are needed for future management of the fish and game resources. A partial list of trails and public use sites has been submitted to the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission and to the State Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

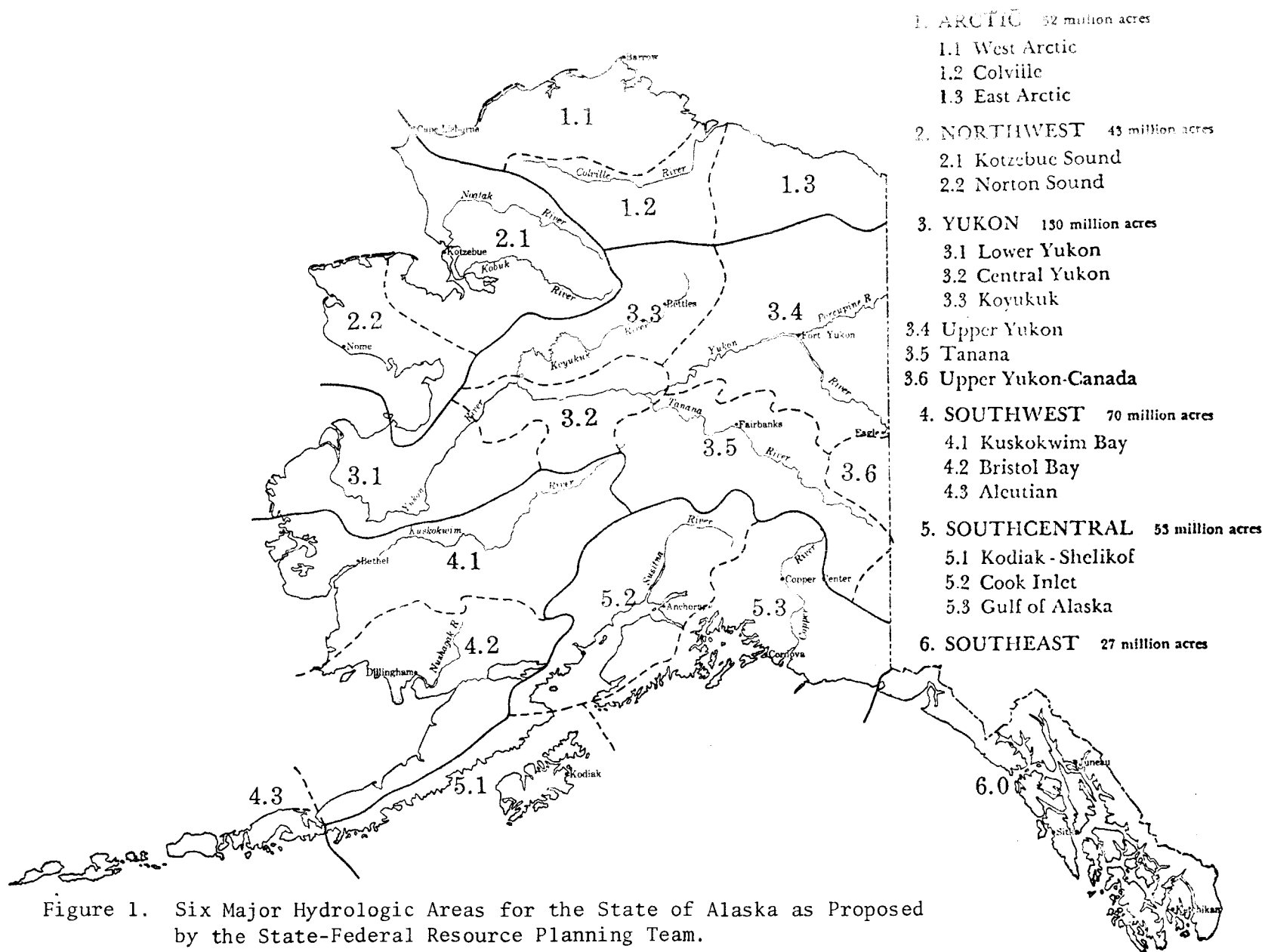


Figure 1. Six Major Hydrologic Areas for the State of Alaska as Proposed by the State-Federal Resource Planning Team.

Two requests were submitted to the Bureau of Land Management for Recreation and Public Purpose sites on two lakes. The applications were later withdrawn due to State selection of the land.

A letter was sent to the Bureau of Land Management requesting their agency withdraw an area on Wien Lake for public use.

Several areas in the Fairbanks district were found to be "Public Domain" and, therefore, open to entry. Coordination between the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the Bureau of Land Management, and the Alaska Division of Lands was successful in persuading the State to select these lands. Any additional lands found in this situation will be handled in the same manner.

Several meetings were held with the Bureau of Land Management concerning methods by which their agency can withdraw lands for public use, recreation, and access sites.

Recommendations were made to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on various water-related projects.

Two field trips were made to assess rivers which were recommended for Wild & Scenic River System classification.

Other federal agencies with which contact and cooperation were involved included the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Coast Guard, and other military agencies.

#### State Lands

Twenty-nine Land Classification Orders (LCO's) issued by the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Lands, during the report period were reviewed by the Access Project. Four of the orders covered lands that did not contain any waters. Fifteen LCO's provided access to 89 streams and 157 lakes in addition to numerous smaller unnamed lakes and streams.

Ten Land Classification Orders reclassified 2,275,984 acres of "open-to-entry" lands to "Resource Management". "Open-to-entry" lands are those lands that are available to residents and may not encompass an area which exceeds five acres or includes more than 400 feet of water frontage of any sort. The entryman will eventually receive patent to the land upon terms and conditions of State law. Since these ten LCO's cover such a vast acreage, no attempt was made to determine the number of streams and lakes involved. However, most of the important lakes contain a Reserved Use classification or classification request.

Requests were submitted to the Division of Lands for "Reserved Use" classifications on 20 lakes and streams and action on these are pending.

A right-of-way was requested to Fourmile Lake in the Fairbanks area (Sec. 8, T18N, R15E, CRM). Rights-of-way were requested to Tanana River boat launching sites in the vicinity of the mouth of the Gerstle River for access to lakes on the opposite side of the Tanana River.

Special Lake Use Permits of ten acres each were requested for access and public use sites on the Salcha and Goodpaster rivers.

Recommendations were made to the Division of Parks on access needs in the Interior region.

Highway plans were reviewed on twelve different projects and recommendations were made on access to the various associated fishing waters.

Recommendations were submitted on the Chena River Recreational Area. A list of high use areas and the Access Projects future plans in the Fairbanks area were submitted to the State Division of Parks.

Three State timber sales were reviewed and recommendations were made for prevention of the destruction of stream habitat and to provide public access to fishing waters.

A request was submitted to the Alaska Division of Lands asking for a special classification for protection of the fall chum salmon spawning area in the Delta River.

Reviews were made on activities associated with recreational areas of all types using federal funds, and recommendations were made to the State Clearinghouse.

Early plans on proposed sales of State land on the Kenai Peninsula enabled the Access Project to review and submit timely recommendations for retention of public access sites and easements to recreational areas.

These contacts in the initial stages of land planning will provide sufficient time for thorough examination and justification for public access.

The interagency agreement involving land use planning between the Department of Natural Resources and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game is still pending approval by the Department of Natural Resources.



Review and recommendations were made to various state agencies including the State Clearinghouse, Alaska Division of Lands, Alaska Division of Parks, Alaska Division of Forestry, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of Environmental Health, Alaska Department of Highways, and the Alaska Division of Aviation.

Application for water rights at Halibut Cove Lagoon was approved by the Division of Water Resources.

The Reserved Use application on Pony Lake (Kodiak Island) was adjusted so that the Kodiak Borough could sell some land and still retain suitable public access.

Those waters delineated as navigable by the Department of Natural Resources were reviewed; additions were submitted based on historical and present use.

#### Borough and City Lands

Recommendations were submitted to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in relation to their planning and zoning of land in the Alexander Creek area.

A fisheries resource inventory was submitted to the City of Anchorage on 19 streams in and adjacent to the Greater Anchorage Area Borough. This was related to their search for more municipal water.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough land use plan was reviewed.

#### Private Lands

A grade involving private land for some State land that would furnish public access to Echo Lake (Wasilla area) was initiated. The private land owner has, to date, been unable to make up his mind on the various parcels offered.

Access to Pasagshak River will have to be negotiated by an agreement with the owner of the land.

Personnel changes of the Department's attorneys have delayed negotiation for access on Sports Lake (Soldotna area).

#### Habitat

Review and field investigations were conducted on development projects to insure public access requirements and proper protection of fish habitat. These consisted of highway projects, gravel removal, water use, mining activity, timber sales, Corps of Engineer projects, Division of Aviation projects, pipeline projects, and local government projects. Of primary concern was the retention of water quality and prevention of barriers to fish movement.

## Discussion

During the report year some time was spent with the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission in session in Anchorage. Detailed explanations and supplemental information was provided on (d)(2) lands to aid the Commission in their recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior.

Perhaps the most important contribution the project can make for the sports anglers is identifying easements across lands selected by village and regional corporations. This program, initiated in the previous report period, has expanded rapidly as the Village Corporations' deadline for land selections is December 18, 1974. The Regional Corporations' deadline for land selections is December 18, 1975.

All of the State lands that were classified as "Open-to-Entry" were reclassified to "Resource Management" effective August 16, 1973. Most of these lands are located in the Susitna River Valley, Tanana River Valley, the Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and Seward. A great number of leases issued in the "Open-to-Entry" lands were on lake shores or along streams. The total acreage of all the above lands reclassified is 2,275,984.02 acres. Although the Access Project has obtained "Reserved Use" classifications on a great number of lakes and a few streams in the former "Open-to-Entry" lands, the reclassification to "Resource Management" will provide time to study and request rights-of-way and public access sites on the numerous waters.

The Access Project land status filing system has been continually updated and expanded to provide current data available for use by the Access Project and other divisions of the Department.

## LITERATURE CITED

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